

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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INFO NOAA ROCKVILLE MD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 09293

STATE FOR IO/SCT (TREVITHICK); NOAA FOR N.E. JOHNSON

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AORG, WMO
SUBJECT: WMO SYG POSITION - POSSIBLE US CANDIDATE

REF: A. 77 STATE A-4947; B. GENEVA 9021

1. SUMMARY: THIS CABLE REVIEWS EVENTS DURING THE
30TH SESSION OF THE WMO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REGARDING
THE DECISION OF DR. D.A. DAVIES TO SEEK A FURTHER
TERM AS SYG OF THE WMO FOR THE PERIOD 1980-1983.
IT CONSIDERS THE POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION THAT THE
US MIGHT TAKE TO FURTHER THE CANDIDACY OF DR. ROBERT
M. WHITE IN THE LIGHT OF DR. DAVIES' DECISION.
END SUMMARY.

2. EVENTS REPORTED IN REFERENCE B WERE THE CULMINATION
OF INTENSIVE EFFORTS ON THE PART OF WMO PRESIDENT TAHA
(EGYPT) TO PERSUADE THE MEMBERS OF THE WMO EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE THAT THEY SHOULD SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION
IN OFFICE OF SYG DAVIES. FROM THE FIRST ARRIVAL OF
DELEGATES, TAHA CONFRONTED MEMBERS OF THE EC WITH
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THE URGENT NEED TO "PERSUADE" DR. DAVIES THAT HE WAS
INDISPENSIBLE TO THE STABILITY AND CONTINUED GROWTH
OF THE WMO AND THAT, IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE
ORGANIZATION, HE SHOULD SET ASIDE ANY PERSONAL DESIRES
TO RETIRE.

3. EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT TAHA TO INFLUENCE DELEGATES

SUBSTANTIALLY EXCEEDED THE PROPER FUNCTION OF A WMO PRESIDENT. TAHA CONVENED A MEETING PRIOR TO THE REGULAR SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE (DURING PREP) OF THE OFFICERS AND PRESIDENTS OF RA'S AND ASKED EACH INDIVIDUALLY TO STATE WHETHER THEY OPPOSED THE CONTINUATION OF DR. DAVIES FOR A FURTHER FOUR-YEAR TERM. THIS MOVE WAS RESENTED BY SEVERAL OF THE PRESIDENTS, WHO HAVE BEEN SUPPORTERS OF DR. WHITE'S CANDIDACY. SIMILAR PRESSURES ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS WERE APPLIED DURING A CAMERA MEETING OF EC. SUBSEQUENT TO THIS MEETING, TAHA REQUESTED FROM EACH MEMBER WRITTEN STATEMENTS SUMMARIZING VIEWS TOWARDS DAVIES WHICH THEY HAD EXPRESSED AT MEETING. THE USDEL AND SEVERAL OTHERS REJECTED THE REQUEST AS IMPROPER. BIAS OF PRESIDENT TAHA WAS ALSO SHOWN BY IMPROPER USE OF THE CHAIR IN EFFORT TO SECURE SUPPORT FOR HIS POSITION. BECAUSE OF THE STRONG CONCERN OF SEVERAL EC MEMBERS, COMPLAINTS WERE MADE TO THE EGYPTIAN MISSION CHIEF BY THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR ON BEHALF OF FRANCE, UK, US, AND CANADA. WE WERE INFORMED THAT PRESIDENT TAHA WAS TOLD OF THESE CONCERNS BY HIS MISSION CHIEF.

4. SYG DAVIES REMAINED ALOOF FROM THESE ACTIVITIES BUT WAS CLEARLY AWARE OF WHAT WAS BEING DONE ON HIS BEHALF BY THE PRESIDENT. THIS CONCLUSION IS BASED ON SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN SYG AND THE US, CONFIDENTIAL

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AUSTRALIA AND UK MEMBERS. SYG REFUSED, HOWEVER, TO MEET WITH A DELEGATION OF FOUR WESTERN EC MEMBERS, SAYING THAT HE WOULD MEET WITH THEM INDIVIDUALLY IF REQUESTED.

5. APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THE 23 EC MEMBERS OPPOSED THE CANDIDACY OF DR. DAVIES FOR REAPPOINTMENT FOR A FURTHER FOUR YEARS. SEVEN MEMBERS WHO CLEARLY OPPOSED REAPPOINTMENT (US, UK, FRANCE, FRG, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, AND CANADA) CAUCUSED TO CONSIDER STRATEGY TO BE FOLLOWED, IN AN ATTEMPT TO SECURE A CLEAR AND UNBIASED EXPRESSION OF THE VIEW OF THE COMMITTEE. OTHER MEMBERS WHO APPEARED TO OPPOSE THE CONTINUATION OF DR. DAVIES WERE FROM ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, CAMEROON, AND THE PHILIPPINES. OPPOSITION OF THIS GROUP INCREASED AS THE MEETINGS PROGRESSED, DUE TO RESENTMENT TO TACTICS OF THE PRESIDENT, AND TO FAILURE OF DAVIES TO MAKE ANY EFFORT TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM ON THIS VITAL QUESTION. THE POSITION OF SEVERAL ADDITIONAL EC MEMBERS APPEARED TO BE IN THE BALANCE.

6. WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF SGY IN OPEN PLENARY OF

HIS INTENTION TO STAND (SEE REF B), FURTHER MOVES ON THIS MATTER ARE NOW CLEARLY UP TO THE US. POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED WITH US EC MEMBER DR. GEORGE BENTON. THERE APPEAR TO BE THREE ALTERNATIVES: 1) TO ADVANCE CANDIDACY OF DR. R.M. WHITE IN OPPOSITION TO THAT OF DR. DAVIES; 2) TO ACCEPT THE PROSPECT OF REAPPOINTMENT OF DR. DAVIES AND THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THIS WILL HAVE AN UNDESIRABLE EFFECT ON THE CAPABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS; 3) TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT ANOTHER CANDIDATE IN ORDER

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 GENEVA 09293

STATE FOR IO/SCT (TREVITHICK); NOAA FOR N.E. JOHNSON

TO ENSURE SOME OPPOSITION TO THE SYG AND TO PROVIDE A POSSIBLE SITUATION AT THE WMO 8TH CONGRESS WHERE DR. WHITE MIGHT COME FORWARD AS A COMPROMISE CANDIDATE.

7. OPTION TO PROMOTE THE CANDIDACY OF DR. WHITE SEEMS AT THIS POINT TO BE THE STRONGEST ALTERNATIVE. HIS EXCELLENT RECORD IN THE WMO, PARTICULARLY IN THE EC OVER THE PAST 14 YEARS, COUPLED WITH THE UNDISPUTED LEADERSHIP OF THE US IN WORLD METEOROLOGY AND ITS SUBSTANTIAL RECORD OF ASSISTANCE TO MANY WMO MEMBERS OVER A LONG PERIOD, MAKES DR. WHITE THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE CANDIDATE. SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT OF THE 23 MEMBERS OF THE EC, AT LEAST 12, AND POSSIBLY AS MANY AS 16, WOULD SUPPORT DR. WHITE IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD AT THIS TIME. THIS PROPORTION IS NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENTATIVE OF WMO MEMBERSHIP, SINCE EC MEMBERS ARE PRESENTING THEIR PERSONAL VIEWS, AND MOST HAVE CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH DR. WHITE.

8. THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CANDIDACY OF DAVIES WITHOUT
OPPOSITION IS A CONSERVATIVE RESPONSE. THIS ALTERNATIVE
WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY RESULT IN RENEWAL OF DAVIES'
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APPOINTMENT BY THE 8TH WMO CONGRESS. A NUMBER OF MEMBERS
BELIEVE THAT THIS WOULD AFFECT UNFAVORABLY THE CAPABILITY
OF THE ORGANIZATION OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS (1980/83).
CONTACTS BETWEEN THE SYG AND HIS STAFF, MEMBERS OF THE
EC, AND OTHER PR'S ARE DIMINISHING. THERE ARE SIGNS THAT
BEAURACRACY IS GROWING WITHIN THE WMO SECRETARIAT. THIS
IS ILLUSTRATED BY SYG PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE NEXT
FINANCIAL PERIOD, WHICH CALLS FOR DOUBLING OF D-1 AND
D-2 POSTS. SHOULD THE US CHOOSE NOT TO OPPOSE DAVIES'
CANDIDACY, US SHOULD REASSESS POSITION. OBJECTIVE
SHOULD BE TO KEEP WMO TRIM WITHOUT IMPACTING IMPORTANT
ONGOING OR PLANNED PROGRAMS, SUCH AS GARP OR WORLD
CLIMATE PROGRAM.

9. THE ALTERNATIVE TO SUPPORT A CANDIDATE OTHER THAN
DR. WHITE IS PROBABLY LEAST ATTRACTIVE. OTHER THAN
DR. WHITE, NO STRONG CANDIDATE WHO MIGHT BE SUCCESSFUL
AGAINST DAVIES CAN BE IDENTIFIED. THE EFFECT OF THIS
ALTERNATIVE WOULD THEREFORE BE MINIMAL, UNLESS THE
UNEXPECTED HAPPENS AND A SITUATION ARISE IN WHICH
DR. WHITE COULD BE BROUGHT FORWARD AT A CRUCIAL POINT
OF THE BALLOTING.

10. I RECOMMEND THE CANDIDACY OF DR. R.M. WHITE, IF
HE AGREES TO RUN. ONE DIFFICULTY WITH THIS POSITION IS
OUR PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION TO A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS
(REF A) WHICH STATED THAT THE US WOULD NOT ADVANCE
CANDIDACY OF WHITE IF DAVIES WERE A CANDIDATE FOR
REAPPOINTMENT. JUSTIFICATION FOR REVERSAL OF THAT
POSITION WOULD BE LACK OF ENDORSEMENT BY THE WMO EC
OF DAVIES CANDIDACY.

11. DECISION OF US POSITION ON THIS MATTER MUST BE
MADE WITHOUT DELAY, ESPECIALLY IF RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE
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IS FOLLOWED. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE USUAL STATEMENT
OF AVAILABILITY OF POST FOR 1980-83 WILL BE ISSUED BY
PRESIDENT TAHA SHORTLY, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT THE
STATEMENT WILL REFER TO DAVIES CANDIDACY. WHITE
CANDIDACY SHOULD BE ADVANCED PRIOR TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

TO VOID POSSIBLE EARLY COMMITMENT OF COUNTRIES TO
SUPPORT DAVIES.

12. A CRUCIAL QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER DR. WHITE
WOULD AGREE TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR THE POST. MY JUDGMENT
IS THAT WE SHOULD PROCEED BY THE DEPARTMENT SEEKING HIS
PERMISSION TO APPROACH A NUMBER OF KEY GOVERNMENTS AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ASK THEM IF THEY WOULD BE PREPARED
TO SUPPORT HIS CANDIDACY IF, IN FACT, HE WERE AVAILABLE.
OUR CONCERN FOR THE LONG RANGE INTERESTS OF WMO SHOULD
REQUIRE US TO TAKE A STRONG AND DECISIVE STAND AGAINST
THE RE-ELECTION OF DR. DAVIES, TAKING THE POSITION THAT
THE FAILURE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO ENDORSE HIS
CANDIDACY AND THE EVENTS DURING THE RECENT MEETING HAVE
RELEASED US FROM ANY OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT THE DAVIES
RE-ELECTION. WE SHOULD ASCERTAIN WHETHER THOSE COUNTRIES
WHO HAVE MEMBERS ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ARE PREPARED
TO ENDORSE ROBERT WHITE'S CANDIDACY. AT THIS POINT,
THE BURDEN SHOULD BE ON THE DEPARTMENT WHICH SHOULD MAKE
ITS DETERMINATION THAT THE FUTURE OF WMO IS JEOPARDIZED
BY THE HANDLING OF THE DAVIES' RE-ELECTION AND THAT IT,
THEREFORE, IS PREPARED TO URGE DR. WHITE TO BE AVAILABLE
IF COMMITMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FROM KEY COUNTRIES.
VANDEN HEUVEL

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